To: Lopez-Carbo, Maria[Lopez-Carbo.Maria@epa.gov]; Behringer, Caroline[Behringer.Caroline@epa.gov]
Cc: Loop, Travis[Loop.Travis@epa.gov]
From: Senn, John
Sent: Tue 2/4/2014 3:52:01 PM
Subject: RE: West Virginia Spill Points to Lack of Data on Threats to Water Supply
image001.jpg

thanks, Maria...anything raise a red flag in the story?

From: Lopez-Carbo, Maria
Sent: Tuesday, February 04, 2014 8:12 AM
To: Senn, John; Behringer, Caroline
Subject: FW: West Virginia Spill Points to Lack of Data on Threats to Water Supply

Here is the story....Cadmus is one of our contractors....

From: Lopez-Carbo, Maria
Sent: Tuesday, February 04, 2014 8:11 AM
To: Clark, Becki; Grevatt, Peter
Subject: West Virginia Spill Points to Lack of Data on Threats to Water Supply

Both AWWA and Cadmus spoke to this reporter.....

West Virginia Spill Points to Lack of Data on Threats to Water Supply
Alexandra Berzon
• @alexandraberzon<http://www.twitter.com/@alexandraberzon>
• Ex. 6 - Personal Privacy
• Alexandra Berzon<https://plus.google.com/112290907055946632798/posts?rel=author>
• Biography<http://topics.wsj.com/person/A/biography/7339>
connect<http://online.wsj.com/news/articles/SB10001424052702304851104579361223250977790?mg=reno64-wsj&url=http%3A%2F%2Fonline.wsj.com%2Farticle%2FSB10001424052702304851104579361223250977790.html>
• Alexandra Berzon
• @alexandraberzon<http://www.twitter.com/@alexandraberzon>
• Ex. 6 - Personal Privacy
• Alexandra Berzon<https://plus.google.com/112290907055946632798/posts?rel=author>
• Biography<http://topics.wsj.com/person/A/biography/7339>
Feb. 3, 2014 7:39 p.m. ET
[http://s.wsj.net/public/resources/images/NA-BZ932_WVACHE_G_20140203183634.jpg]

A January chemical spill contaminated a Charleston, W.Va., water plant. Associated Press

Soon after a chemical spill contaminated a large West Virginia water system last month, water-company officials said they were unfamiliar with the substance and didn't know it was being stored about a mile upriver from a treatment plant.

That information had been filed with the state annually by the storage facility since at least 2007, but it wasn't shared with the utility, West Virginia American Water, or its state regulator. It also wasn't included in a study completed in 2002, when the federal government required states to perform a one-time assessment of potential risks to the water supply.

West Virginia is hardly alone. Interviews with water-quality and security experts, as well as a review of documents, show that a 1996 federal program known as "source water protection" has led to wide disparities in how well the nation's drinking-water supplies are monitored. A Senate committee hearing

Tuesday is expected to examine those gaps.

"There are a lot of vulnerable and very susceptible water systems out there," said Chi Ho Sham, a Senior Vice President for the consultancy firm Cadmus Group Inc. "Because of resource constraints, not too many are actually doing a lot of work." Cadmus conducted a 2009 survey on source-water protection for the Water Research Foundation, which is funded by utilities.

Now, the eyes of the water industry have turned to Charleston, W.Va., where authorities said a chemical blend known as Crude MCHM leaked out of a storage tank on Jan. 9 into the nearby Elk River and then into a water-treatment facility. About 300,000 people were left without safe drinking water for days.

"You can't believe how much conversation this has sparked," said Tom Curtis, deputy executive director of American Water Works Association, which represents water utilities. "There are gaps in our knowledge base about the chemicals that are stored and used in America."

Nearly 12,000 systems rely on surface water, including rivers lined with industrial plants. After the spill, West Virginia's U.S. senators introduced a bill that would require states to identify the chemicals stored near water sources and relay that information directly to water utilities.

The 1996 federal program, which required the one-time assessment of all 51,870 water systems nationwide, was broad: States could, for instance, identify local industrial sites but didn't have to explore what they made or stored beyond a limited number of federally-regulated chemicals. Crude MCHM isn't among them.

States were given a total of about $100 million and 31/2 years to complete initial assessments. Many rushed and relied primarily on existing government databases, which are limited, according to a 2006 Environmental Protection Agency manual that advised states to update their assessments. The EPA doesn't track the outcomes or whether assessments have been updated.

The program also recommended—but didn't require—that local authorities develop protection plans. By 2012, 40% of utilities had begun to implement such a plan, an EPA report concluded. A 2009 Water Research Foundation survey of 30 utilities found nearly half didn't seem to know what source-water protection programs were.

Maureen Duffy, a spokeswoman for West Virginia American Water, a unit of American Water Works Co., said its facilities regularly test for more than 100 contaminants and develop emergency plans. She said like all water systems, the company relies on local industry to take measures to protect the watershed and alert authorities about accidents.

Representatives of Freedom Industries Inc., which ran the storage facility, didn't respond to requests for comment.

Ms. Duffy also said her company conducted a vulnerability assessment in 2003 required after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks that is on file with federal authorities but not accessible to the public. The company continues to update that report, she said. That law focused on possible terror threats, not on pollutants, though experts said that many utilities have included a general look at potential source contamination.

Not far downstream from the Elk River, along the heavily industrialized Ohio River, Greater Cincinnati Water Works has taken a more aggressive approach. The utility voluntarily updates its assessment every year by asking industrial facility owners near treatment plants about their chemicals, said Bruce Whitteberry, who heads up water protection for the utility.

"We don't know all the chemicals in our entire watershed—that would be unrealistic," Mr. Whittebury said. But they are familiar with substances close to the water intake, he said.

West Virginia's 2002 assessment concluded the Charleston-area water supply was "highly susceptible" to contamination but said limited data and resources prevented a more detailed look. It identified the site of the spill—then a Pennzoil-Quaker State Co. terminal—as a potential contamination source near the water intake. The assessment also recommended that agencies and water utilities develop plans to determine actual risk and prepare for it.

State officials said West Virginia American Water and many other systems didn't elect to follow up beyond filling out a state emergency-planning form required in 2006. That form identified flooding and main breaks as the main risks to the Charleston system, according to a copy viewed by The Wall Street Journal.

"We quite frankly didn't hear a lot back from the water systems about wanting to do this management planning," said Bill Toomey, who runs the source-water protection program for the state.

Ms. Duffy said the utility has done other types of risk planning.

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